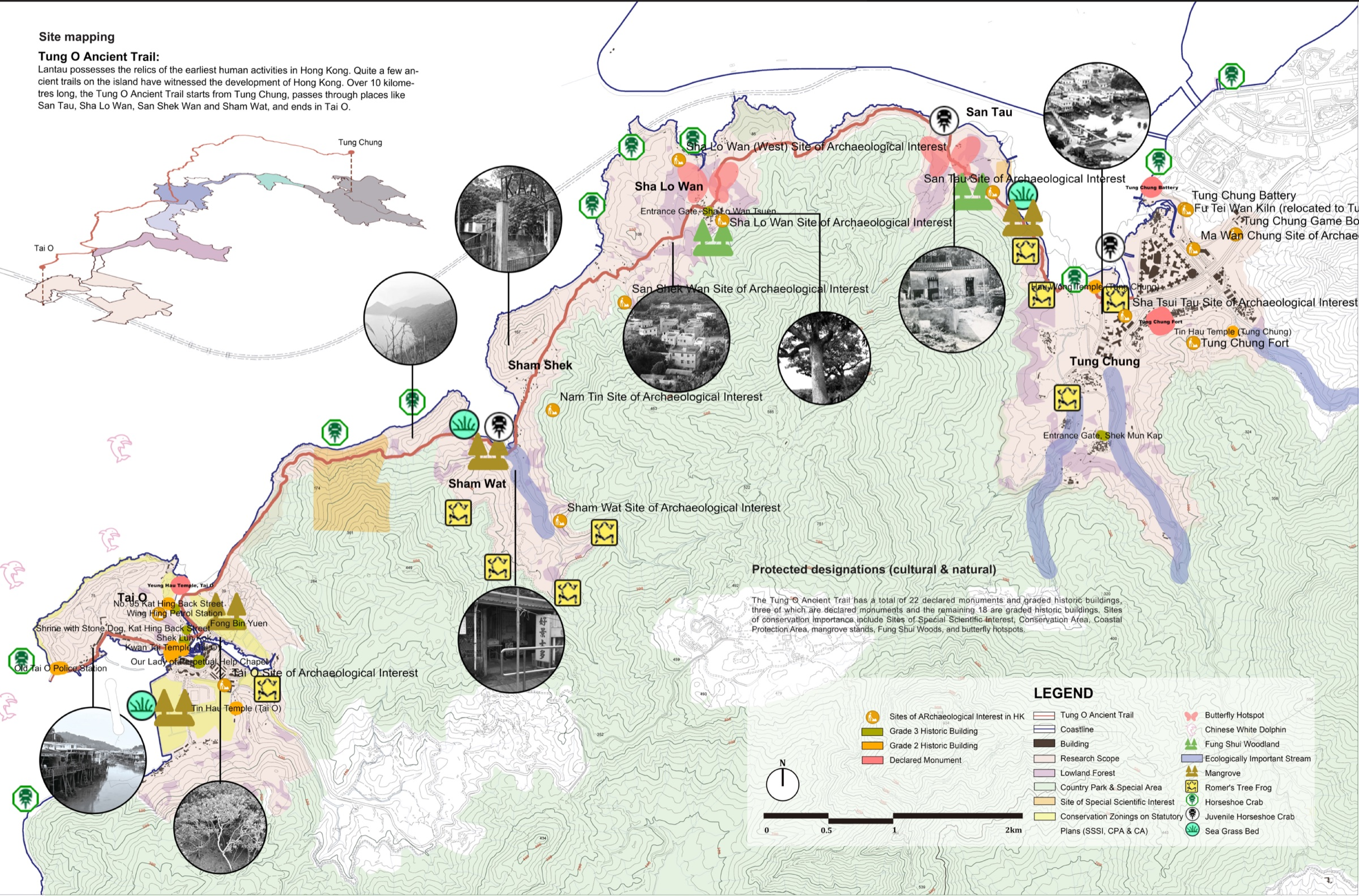


Walking the living legacy of Tung O ancient Trail

Site mapping

Tung O Ancient Trail:

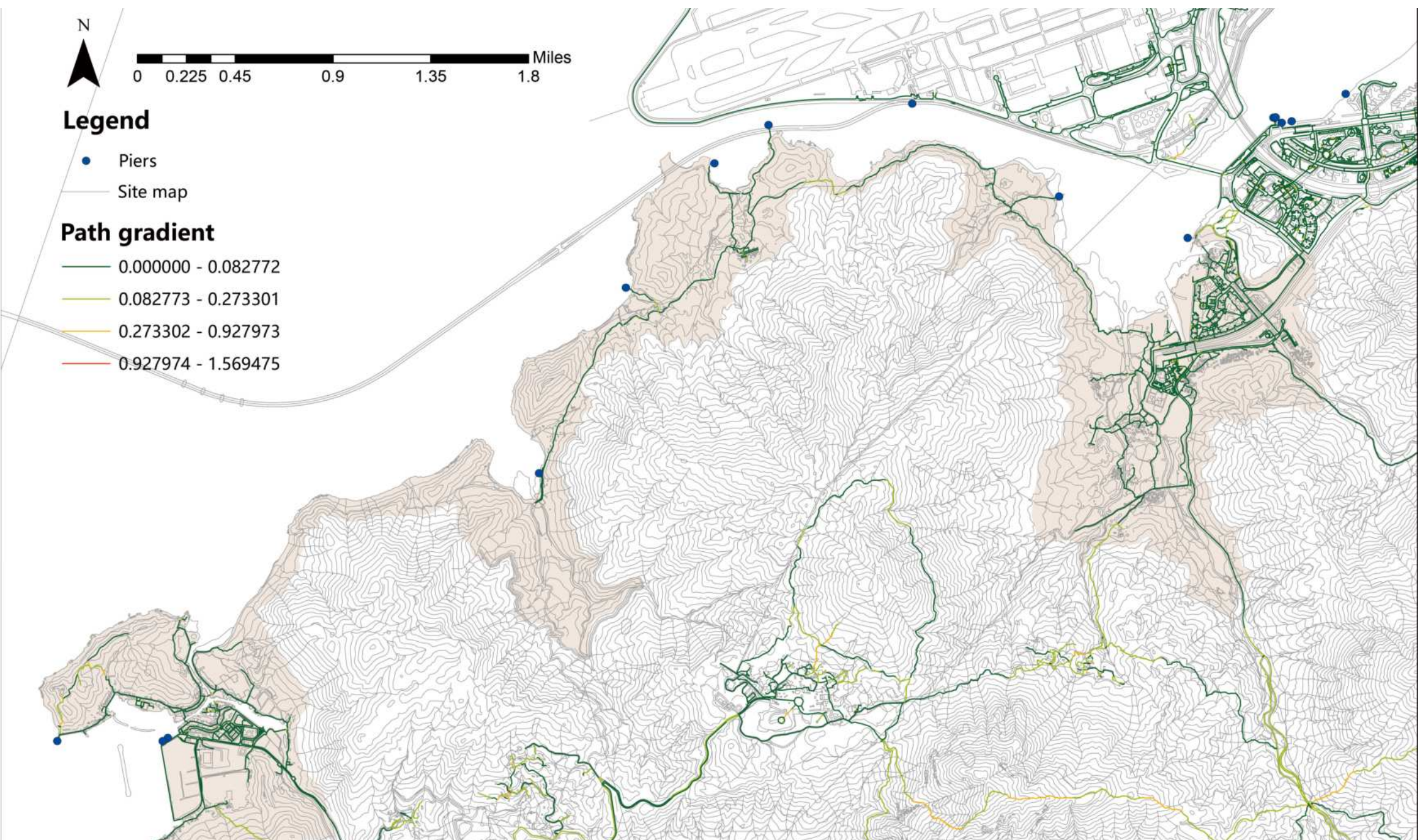
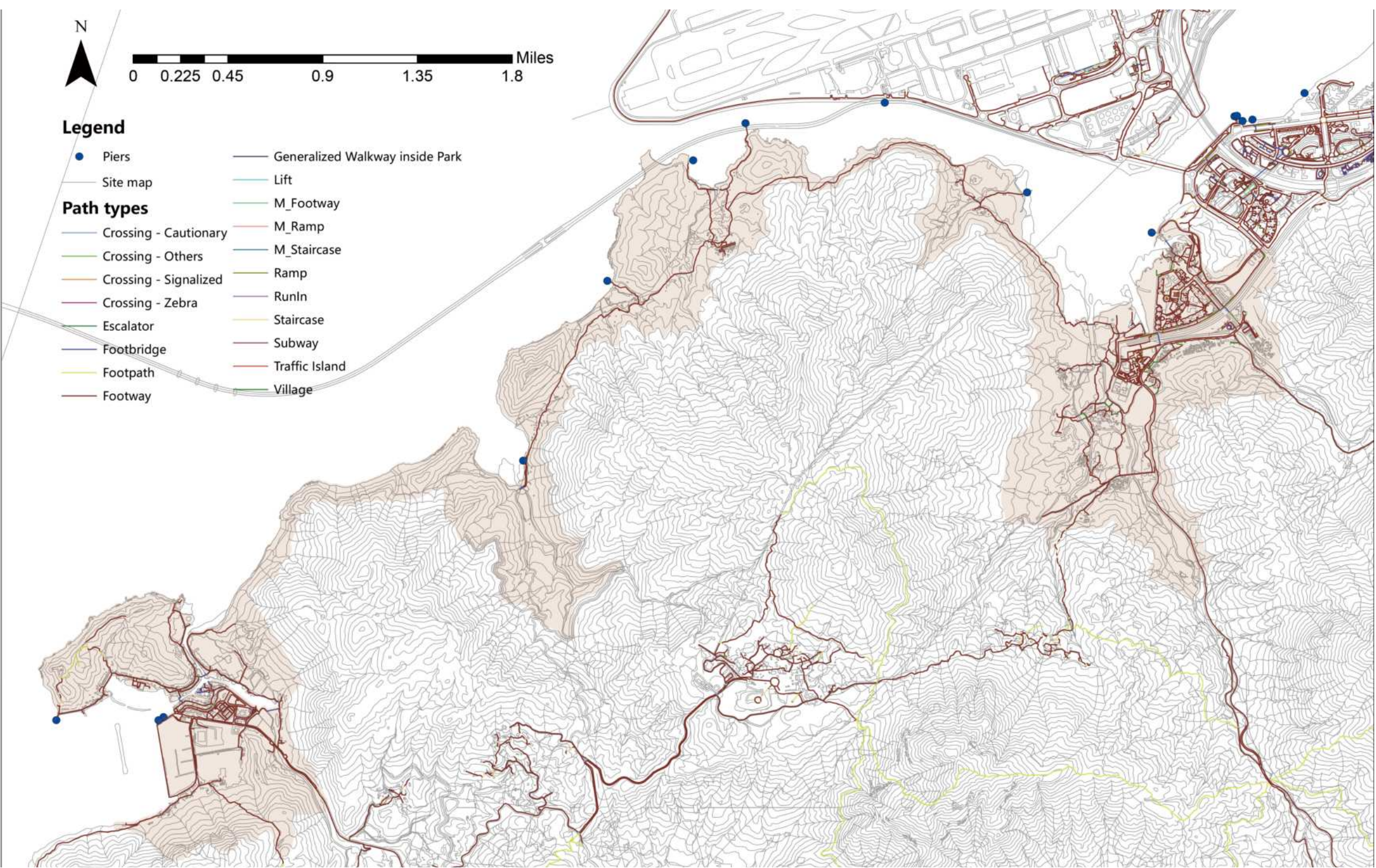
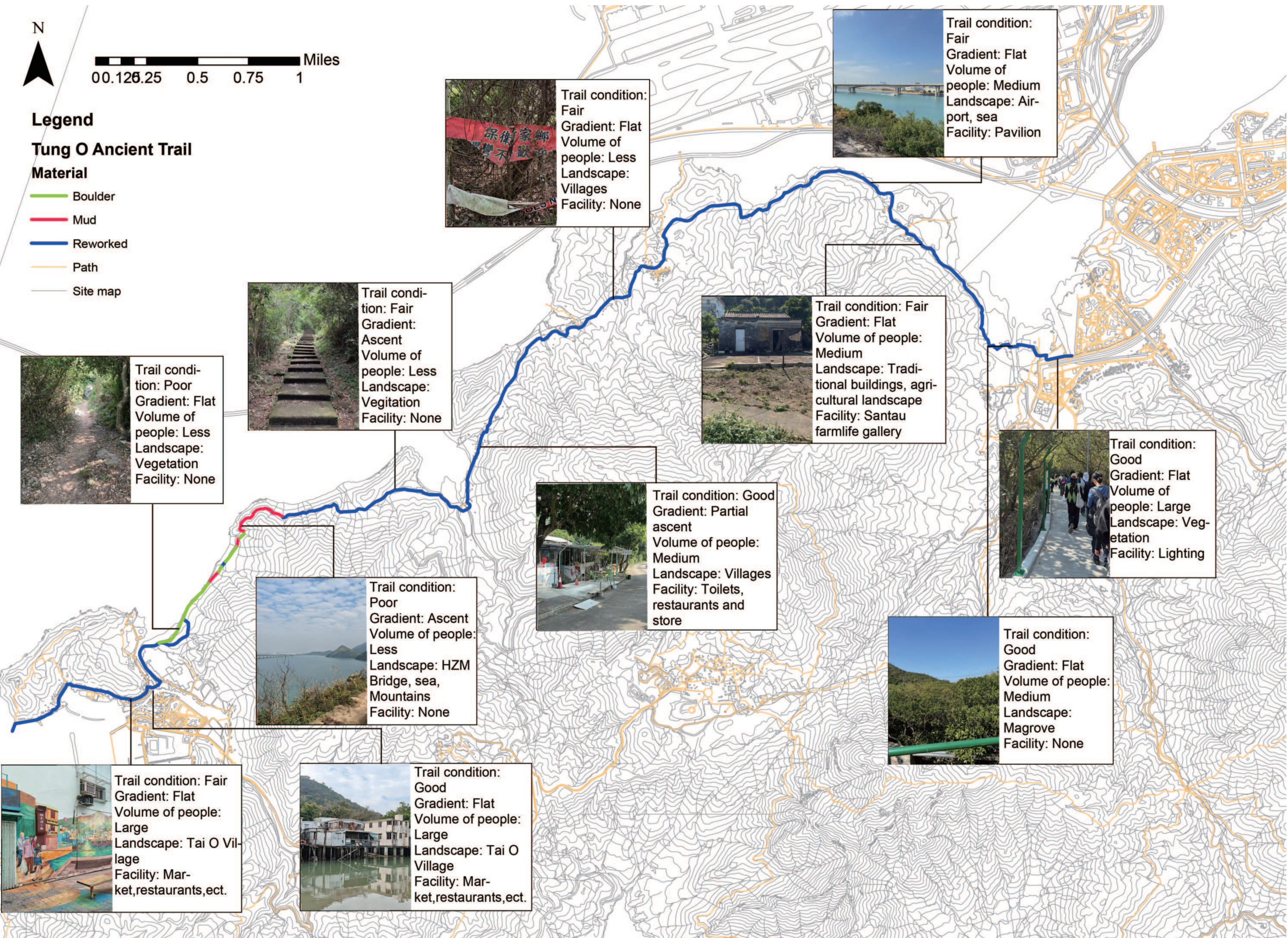
Lantau possesses the relics of the earliest human activities in Hong Kong. Quite a few ancient trails on the island have witnessed the development of Hong Kong. Over 10 kilometres long, the Tung O Ancient Trail starts from Tung Chung, passes through places like San Tau, Sha Lo Wan, San Shek Wan and Sham Wat, and ends in Tai O.



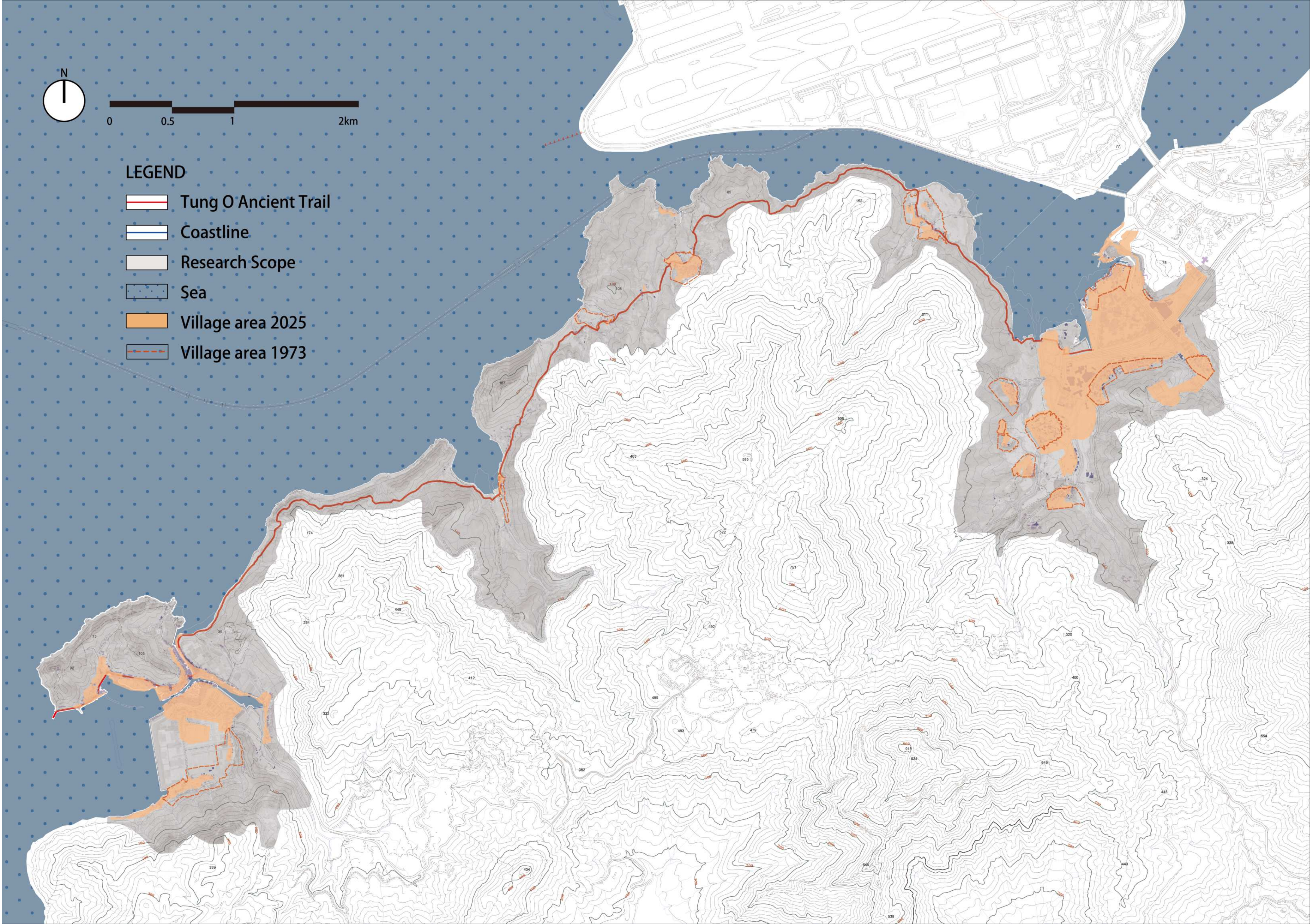
Condition Assessment

Trail Condition Survey

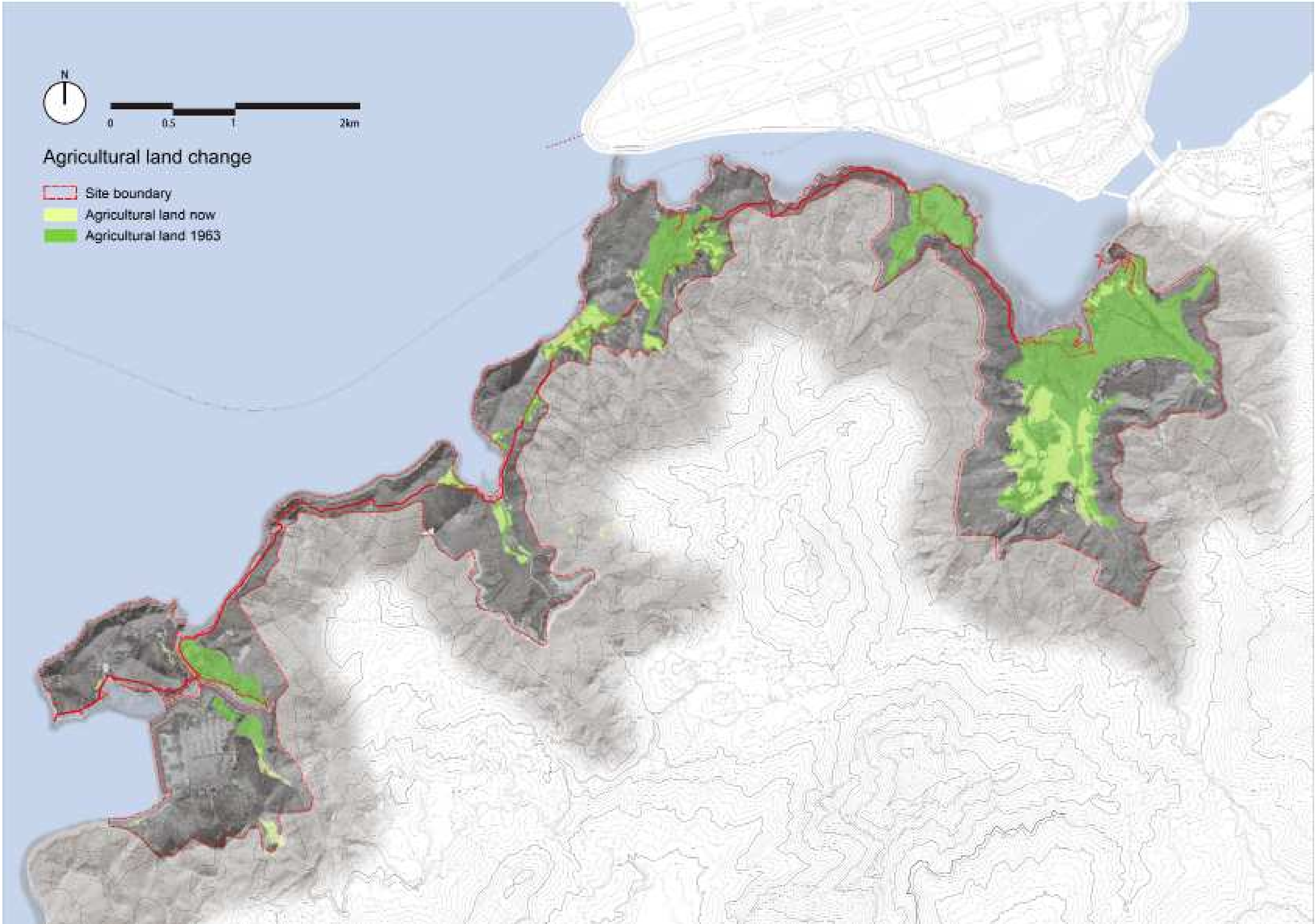
Type of Section	Brief Description	Definition	Photo reference
Mud	Majority of the section is comprised of soil/mud surface, without any trace of concrete rework	- Mud surface only: no obviously observable stones/boulders; - Mud with occasional stones/boulders: random stones/boulders (natural/modified by human) observable along the mud surface;	
Boulder	Majority of the section is paved with boulder	- Purposely paved boulders path: typical paving with one to three boulders width. In some cases more boulders in width. The width of the boulder paved path range from 2 to 5 feet. The paving demonstrated a relatively flat surface. - Purposely paved boulders with occasional damaged sections or signs of minor repairs or reworked areas: same as above except that some short damaged sections showing the mud surface or signs of minor repairs/reworked parts with infilled concrete that can be observed through close observation. The minor repairs/reworked parts usually occurred along steps	 
Reworked	Majority of the section shows obvious reworked path (repaired, upgraded, or reinforced) with modern materials	- Pure concrete surface: plain concrete surfaced path; - Concrete with gravel or small stones: concrete mixed with gravel or small stones; - Stones/rocks/boulders embedded with concrete surface - Repair or reinforced works with modern materials	 



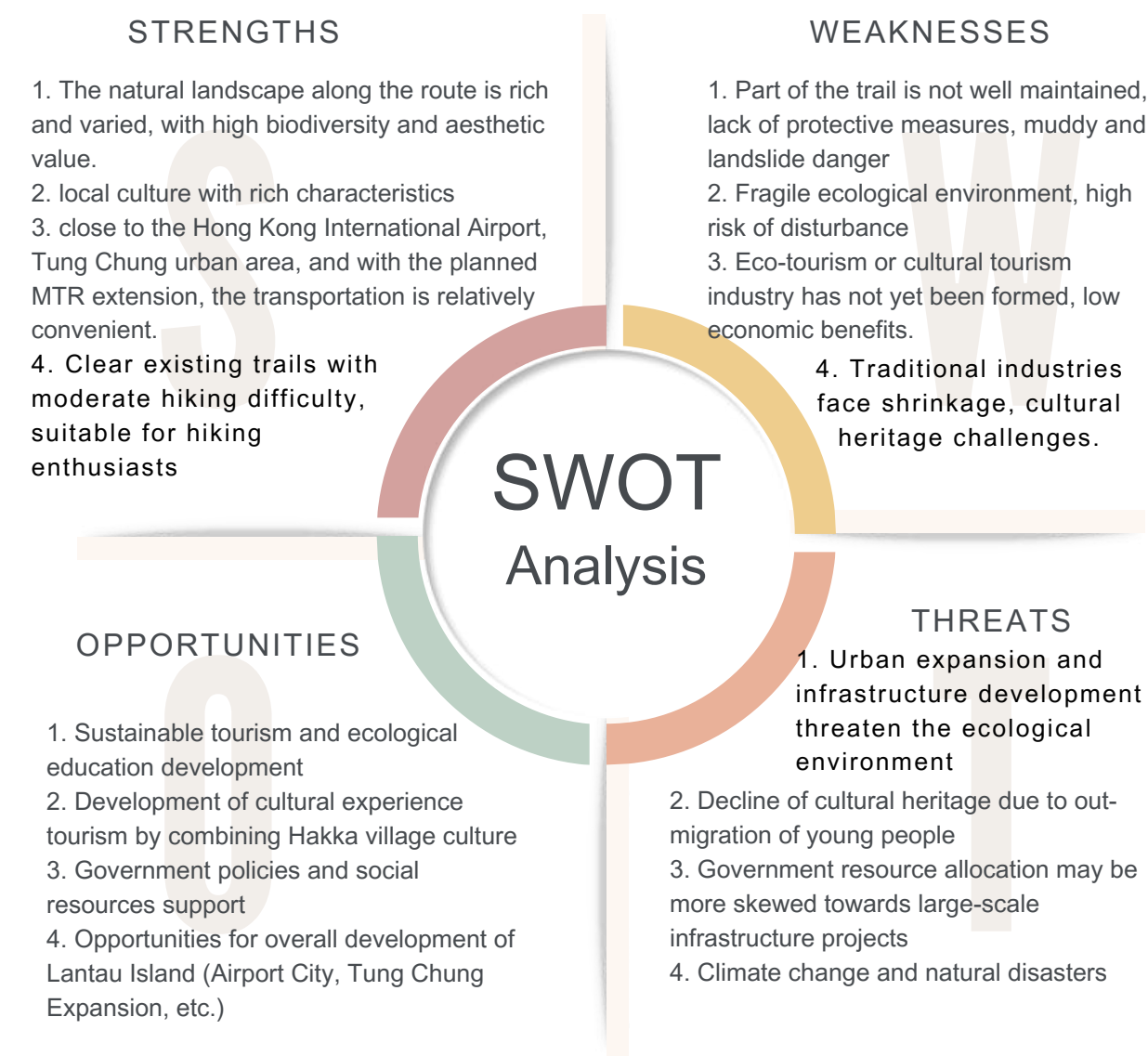
Village Assessment



Agricultural Land Assessment

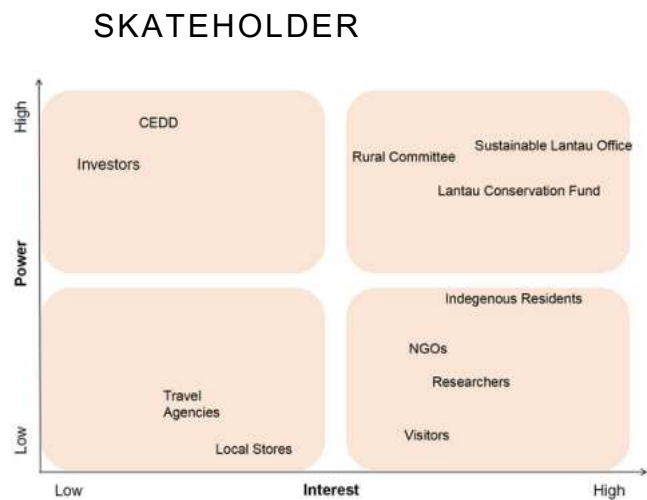


SWOT ANALYZE



RISK ANALYZE

HIGH RISK	Shared belief of villagers, Abandoned farmland	Local population loss, Ecological integrity and biodiversity, Traditional practices, Local community connection, Piers
LOW RISK	Modern infrastructure (new signage, small structures, etc.) Pathway form, The distribution of villages	Trail's physical structure, Locally practiced temple and shrines, Natural landscape, Traditional architecture, Accessibility
	LOW VALUE	HIGH VALUE



This map shows a high level of stakeholder engagement, with local communities, government agencies and non-governmental organizations actively supporting the project while ensuring equitable benefits. As a result, sustainable tourism empowers local people while preserving the cultural and natural heritage of TOAT.

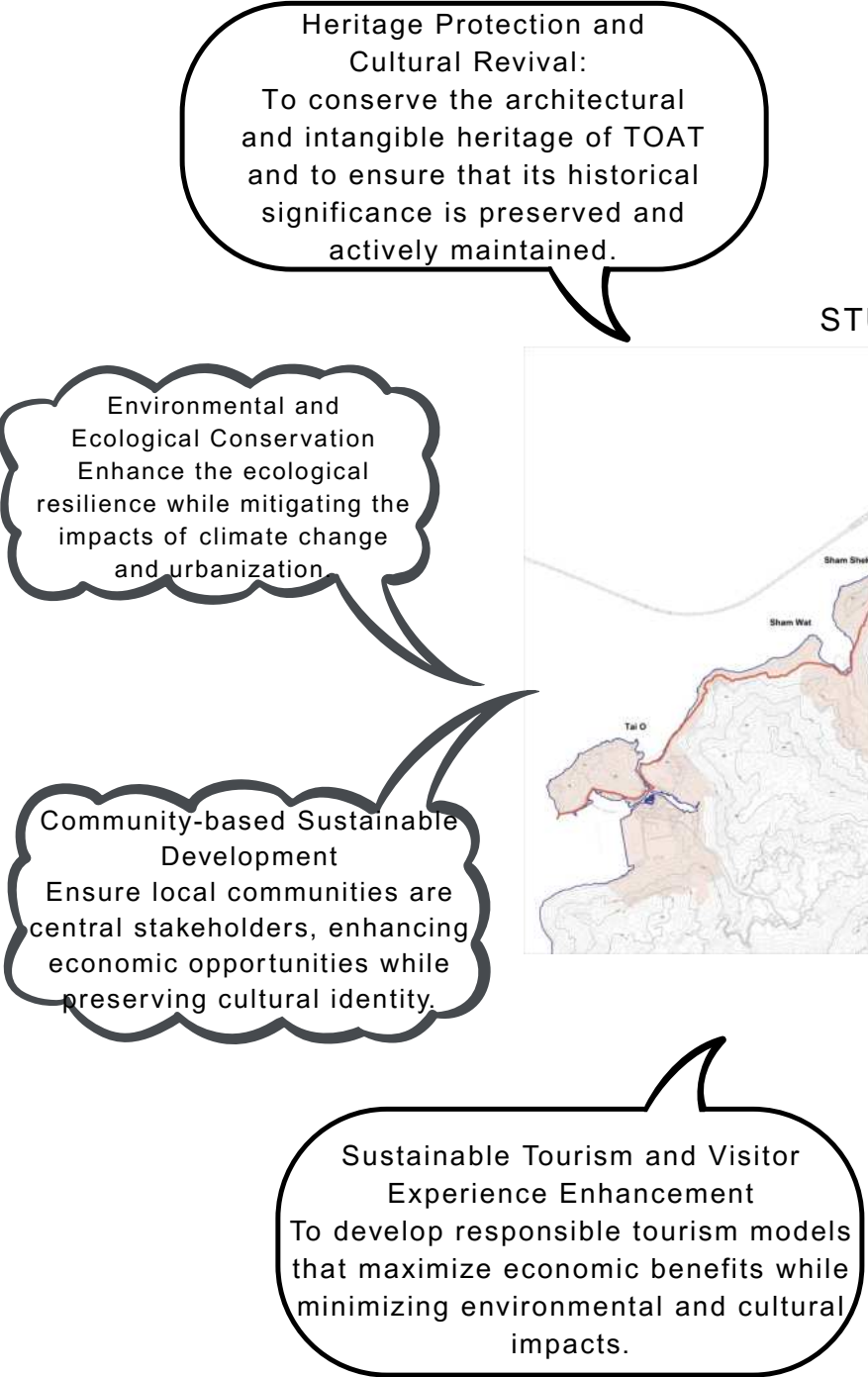
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING: PRIORITIES AND WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT

Stakeholder	Priorities & Concerns	Commitment & Willingness to Support
Indigenous Residents & Villagers	- Economic livelihood & employment - Preservation of cultural identity & traditions - Control over tourism development to prevent over-commercialization -Infrastructure improvements	High commitment – Villagers willing to participate in eco-tourism (e.g., homestays, craft markets, heritage guides) if they receive fair benefits and decision-making power. Concerns – Some villagers may not want to be disturbed by a large number of visitors.
Local Business Owners	- New economic opportunities from sustainable tourism - Development of local products (e.g., seafood, handicrafts, farm produce)	Strong interest – Willing to invest in tourism-friendly businesses if given financial and marketing support. Challenges – Need for training in tourism management & customer service.
SLO & CEDD	- Balancing heritage conservation, environmental protection, and development - Infrastructure planning and funding allocations - Ensuring policies align with Hong Kong's sustainable development goals	Institutional backing – Committed to supporting infrastructure upgrades as part of Lantau's sustainable development strategy. Government priorities fluctuate – Need for ongoing advocacy to ensure heritage conservation is prioritized over large-scale commercial development.
NGOs & Environmental Groups	- Biodiversity conservation & protection of cultural heritage - Community participation in conservation efforts	Active supporters – Willing to collaborate on heritage restoration, conservation programs, and training for villagers. Funding limitations – Depend on external grants and donations for long-term projects.
Researchers	- Academic research on heritage preservation and eco-tourism - Student engagement through field studies and volunteer programs	Strong interest – Researchers eager to document the trail's historical and ecological significance and develop sustainable tourism frameworks. Need for funding – Research partnerships depend on financial resources and academic grants.
Tourism Operators & Travel Agencies	- Creating unique, authentic tourism experiences - Promoting eco-tourism and heritage-based travel	Commercial interest – Travel companies willing to market the site if infrastructure is improved and logistics are efficient. Risk of over-commercialization – Need strict guidelines to prevent mass tourism impacts.
Visitors & Tourists	- Desire for eco-friendly, off-the-beaten-path experiences - Interest in cultural immersion & heritage learning	Strong demand – Tourists, especially eco-conscious and cultural travelers, show interest in authentic local experiences. Sustainability risk – Without proper visitor management, excessive foot traffic may strain the environment and local communities.

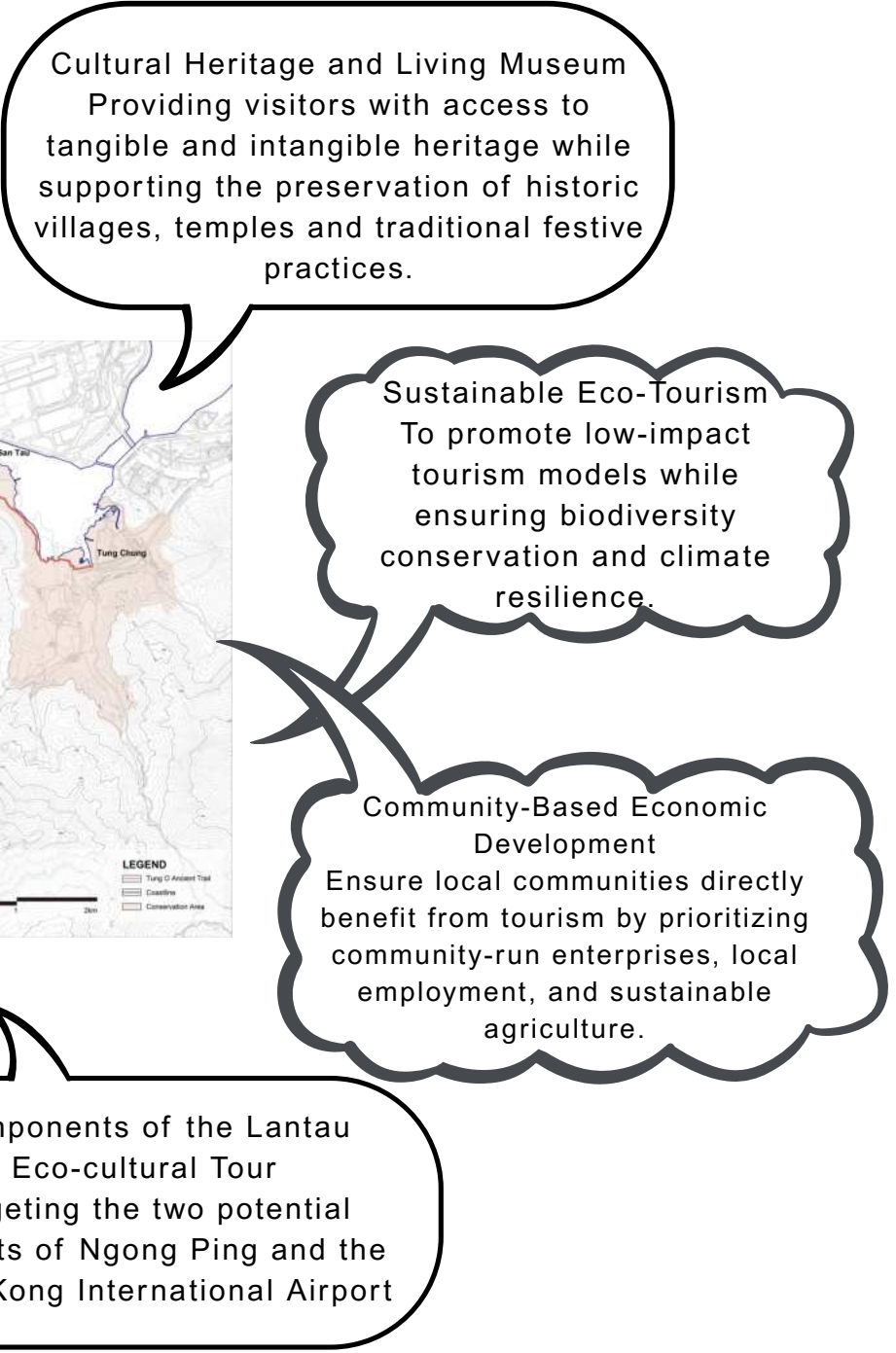
VISIONS AND PROPOSED USE

The long-term conservation and management vision for Tung O Ancient Trail (TOAT) aims to establish a sustainable, community-based heritage and ecological corridor that integrates cultural preservation, environmental conservation, and responsible tourism development.

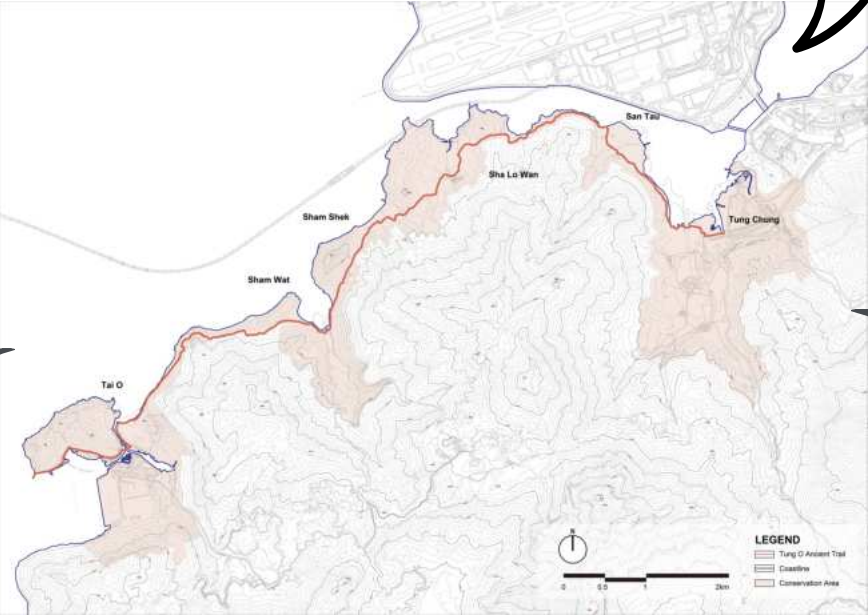
VISIONS



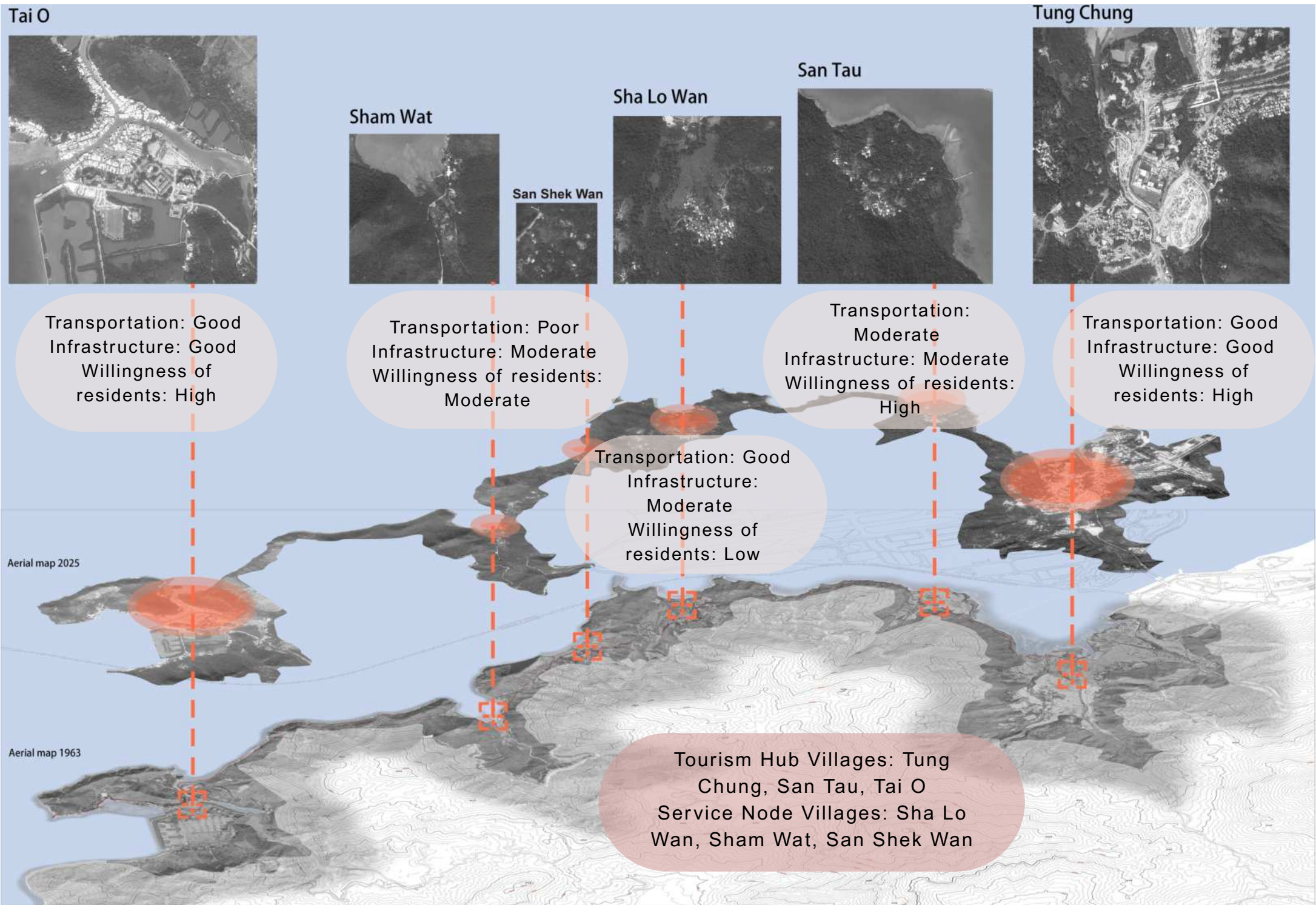
PROPOSED USE



STUDY AREA

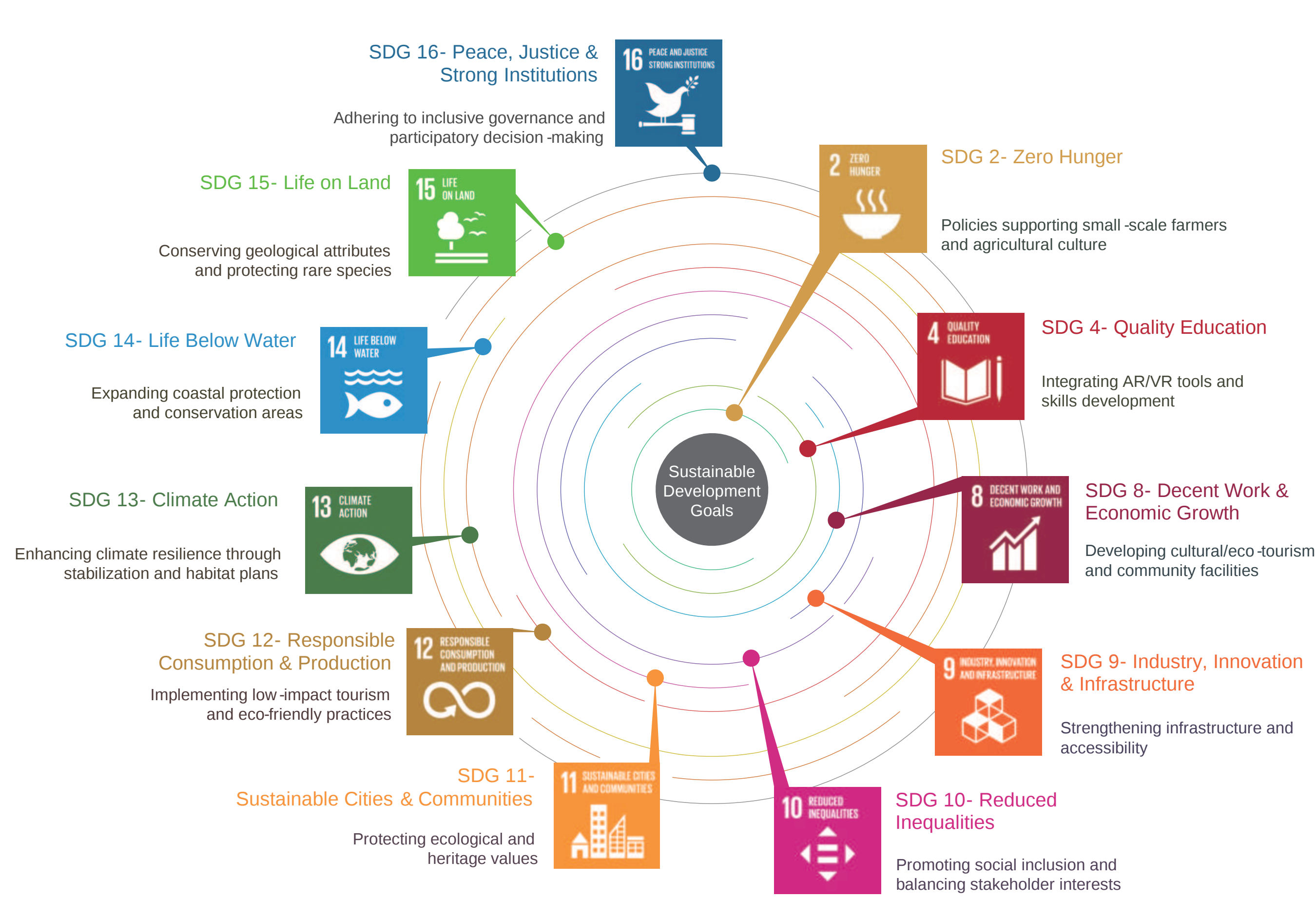


POSITIONING OF VILLAGES

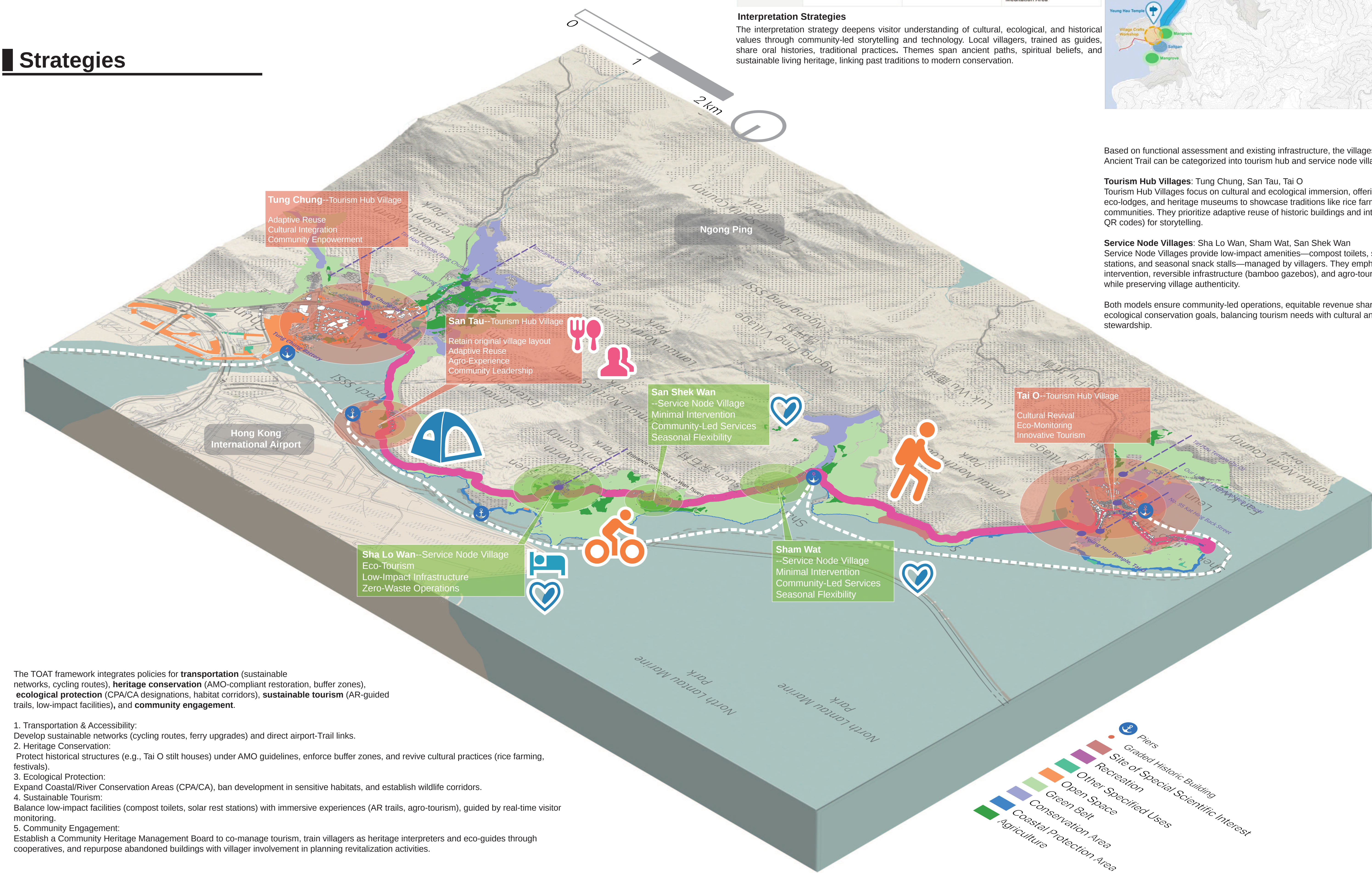


Conservation Policies and Guidelines

Alignments with SDGs



Strategies



The TOAT framework integrates policies for **transportation** (sustainable networks, cycling routes), **heritage conservation** (AMO-compliant restoration, buffer zones), **ecological protection** (CPA/CA designations, habitat corridors), **sustainable tourism** (AR-guided trails, low-impact facilities), and **community engagement**.

- Transportation & Accessibility:** Develop sustainable networks (cycling routes, ferry upgrades) and direct airport-Trail links.
- Heritage Conservation:** Protect historical structures (e.g., Tai O stilt houses) under AMO guidelines, enforce buffer zones, and revive cultural practices (rice farming, festivals).
- Ecological Protection:** Expand Coastal/River Conservation Areas (CPA/CA), ban development in sensitive habitats, and establish wildlife corridors.
- Sustainable Tourism:** Balance low-impact facilities (compost toilets, solar rest stations) with immersive experiences (AR trails, agro-tourism), guided by real-time visitor monitoring.
- Community Engagement:** Establish a Community Heritage Management Board to co-manage tourism, train villagers as heritage interpreters and eco-guides through cooperatives, and repurpose abandoned buildings with villager involvement in planning revitalization activities.

Visitor access and interpretation

Zone	Description	Visitor Regulations
Ecological Conservation Zone	Ecologically sensitive areas, including conservation area, coastal protection area, sites of special scientific interest, nullah, and river channel.	Restricted access during ecologically and biologically sensitive and extreme weather conditions. No littering allowed.
Cultural Heritage Zone	Including village-type development areas, temples and shrines, graded historic buildings and declared monuments.	Limited group sizes for village tours. Prohibit commercial photography without permits.
Recreation Zone	Recreation areas, rest stations, places of activity and public spaces in certain villages.	Encourage responsible hiking according to self-physical condition. Encourage participation in community activities and follow local customs and traditions.
Buffer Zone	Transitional areas between villages and natural habitats, including agricultural areas.	Monitor for encroachment on agricultural land or illegal activities. Promote agro-tourism in agricultural areas.

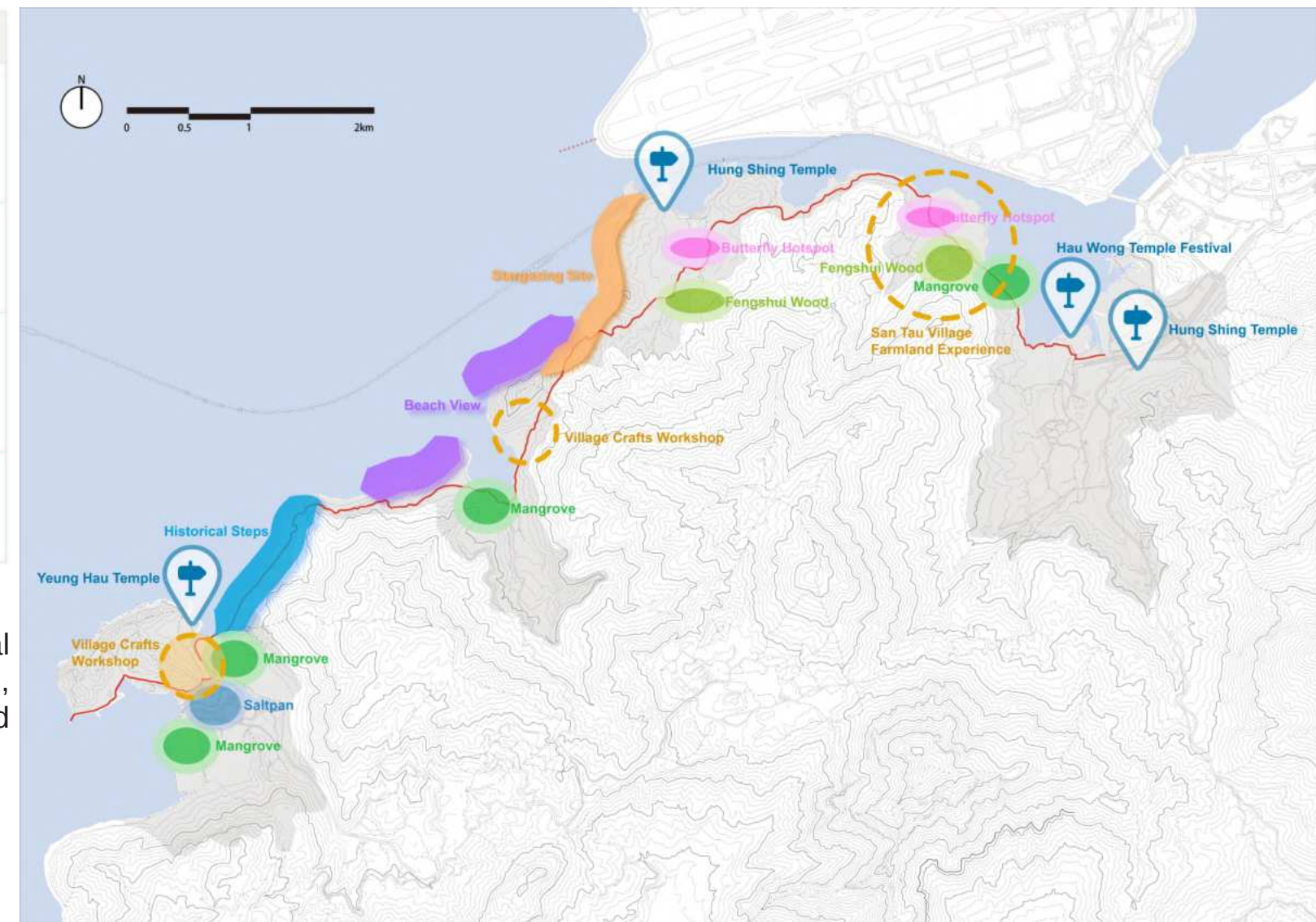
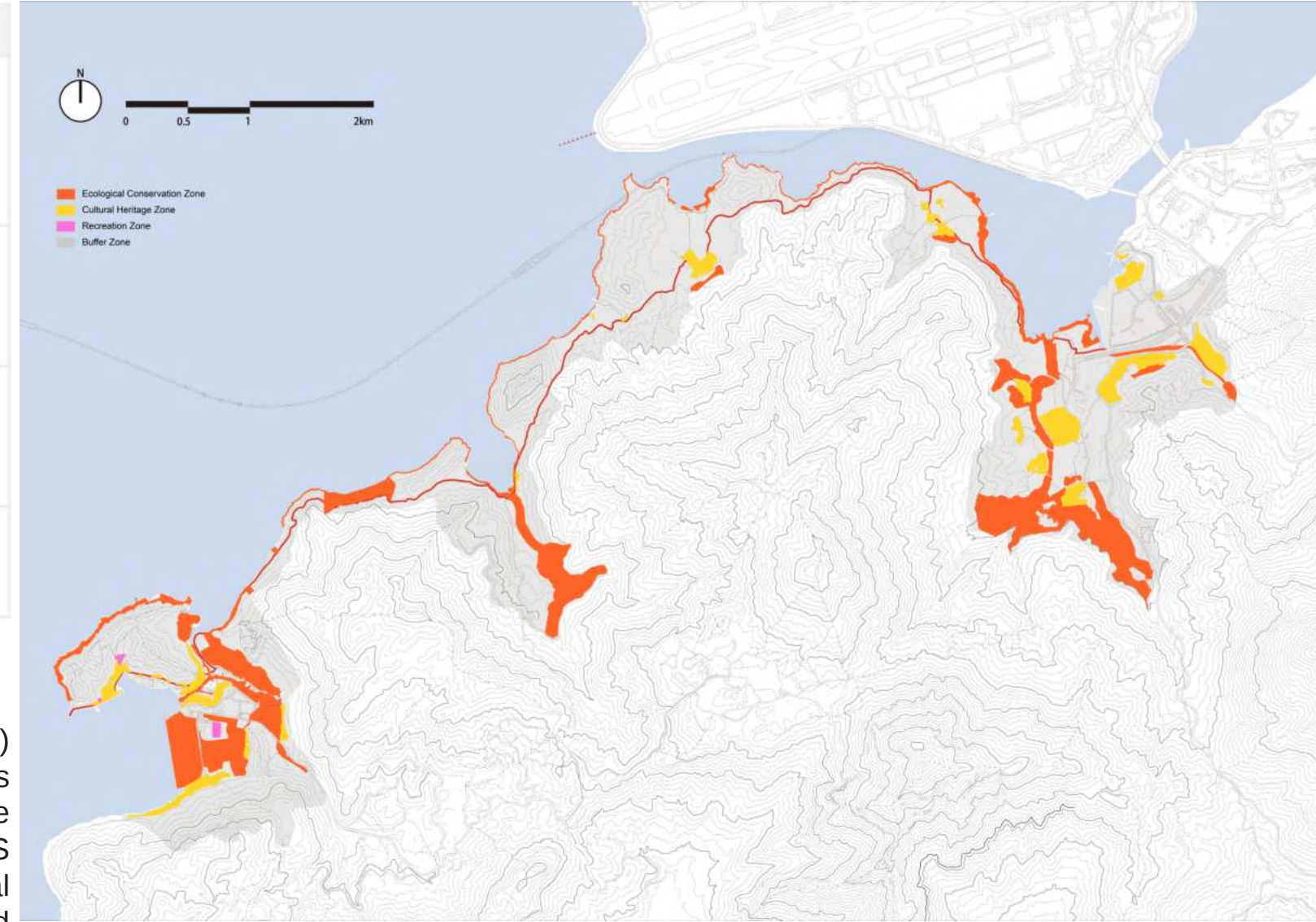
Visitor Management and Access

The strategy employs a zoning-based framework to manage visitors. Ecological Conservation Zones strictly protect sensitive habitats (mangroves, rare species areas) with access bans during breeding seasons. Cultural Heritage Zones safeguard historic sites (temples, villages) by limiting group sizes and commercial activities. Recreation Zones promote responsible hiking and community-led agro-tourism in buffer areas, while Buffer Zones utilize GIS updates and seasonal infrastructure (e.g., removable bamboo gazebos) to adapt to ecological shifts. Visitor flow is managed through peak-season ticketing, real-time crowd monitoring, and low-impact facilities (compost toilets, solar-powered stations).

Interpretation Route	Theme Positioning	Target Group	Key Sites
Heritage Walk	Villages and History	Culture lovers, parent-child tourists, Ngong Ping tourists	Tung Chung Fort → Hung Shing Temple in Sha Lo Wan → Historical Stone Steps → Yeung Hau Temple in Tai O
Eco Walk	Natural Ecology and Species Conservation	Eco-photographers, nature lovers	Butterfly hotspot → Fung Shui Forest → Salt pans → Mangrove forests
Living Heritage Route	Community Life and Festival Experience	Experiential tourists, airport transit tourists, farm life enthusiasts	Sam Tau Village Farmland Experience → Village Crafts Workshop → Hau Wong Temple Festival Site (season-specific)
Night Experience	Starry sky, nature healing	Night Tourism Enthusiasts, Wellness Tourists	Nighttime Ecological Stargazing Site → Beach Sea Viewing Meditation Area

Interpretation Strategies

The interpretation strategy deepens visitor understanding of cultural, ecological, and historical values through community-led storytelling and technology. Local villagers, trained as guides, share oral histories, traditional practices. Themes span ancient paths, spiritual beliefs, and sustainable living heritage, linking past traditions to modern conservation.



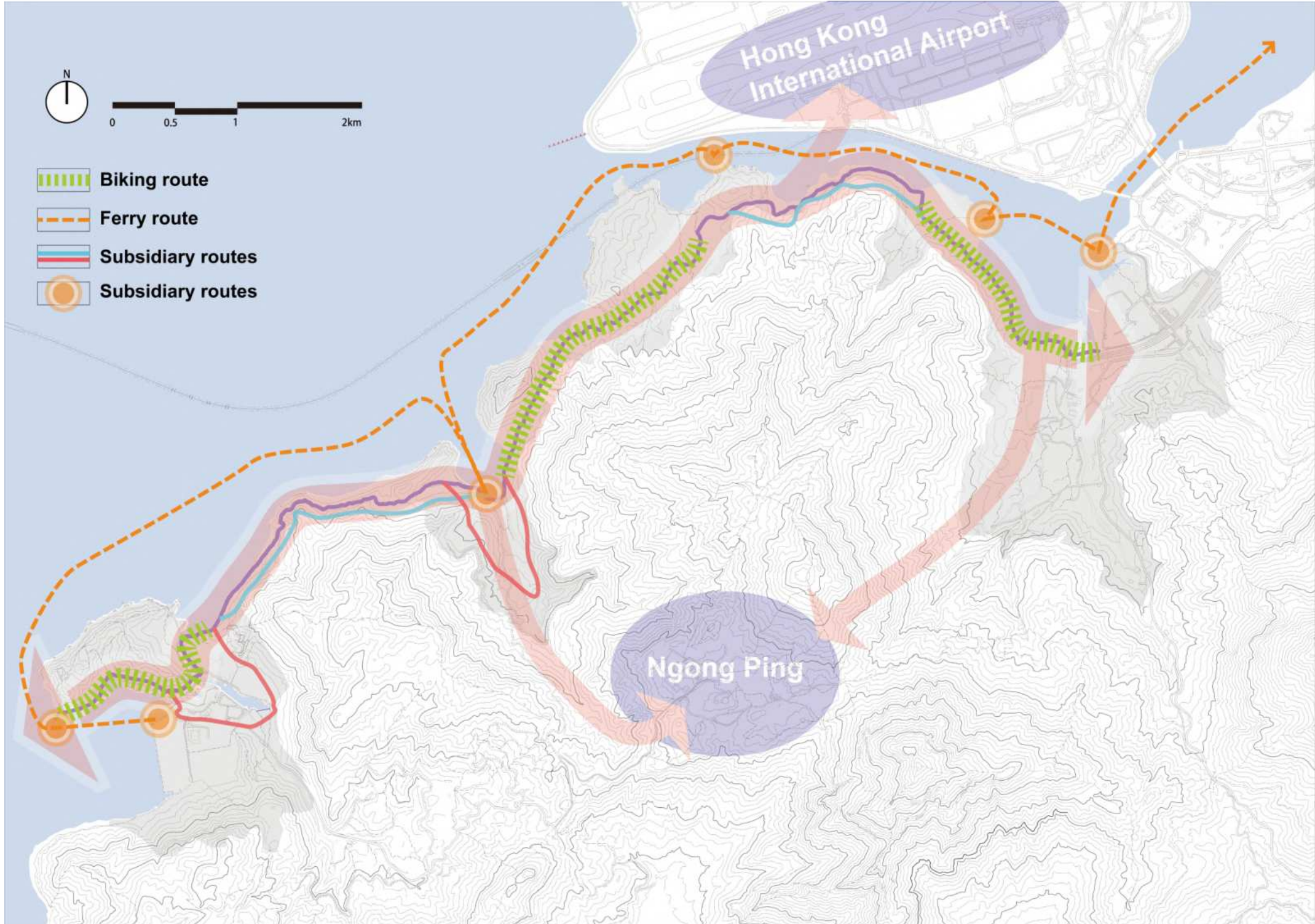
Based on functional assessment and existing infrastructure, the villages along the Tung O Ancient Trail can be categorized into tourism hub and service node villages.

Tourism Hub Villages: Tung Chung, San Tau, Tai O
Tourism Hub Villages focus on cultural and ecological immersion, offering visitor centers, eco-lodges, and heritage museums to showcase traditions like rice farming and stilt-house communities. They prioritize adaptive reuse of historic buildings and integrate technology (AR, QR codes) for storytelling.

Service Node Villages: Sha Lo Wan, Sham Wat, San Shek Wan
Service Node Villages provide low-impact amenities—compost toilets, solar-powered rest stations, and seasonal snack stalls—managed by villagers. They emphasize minimal intervention, reversible infrastructure (bamboo gazebos), and agro-tourism to support hikers while preserving village authenticity.

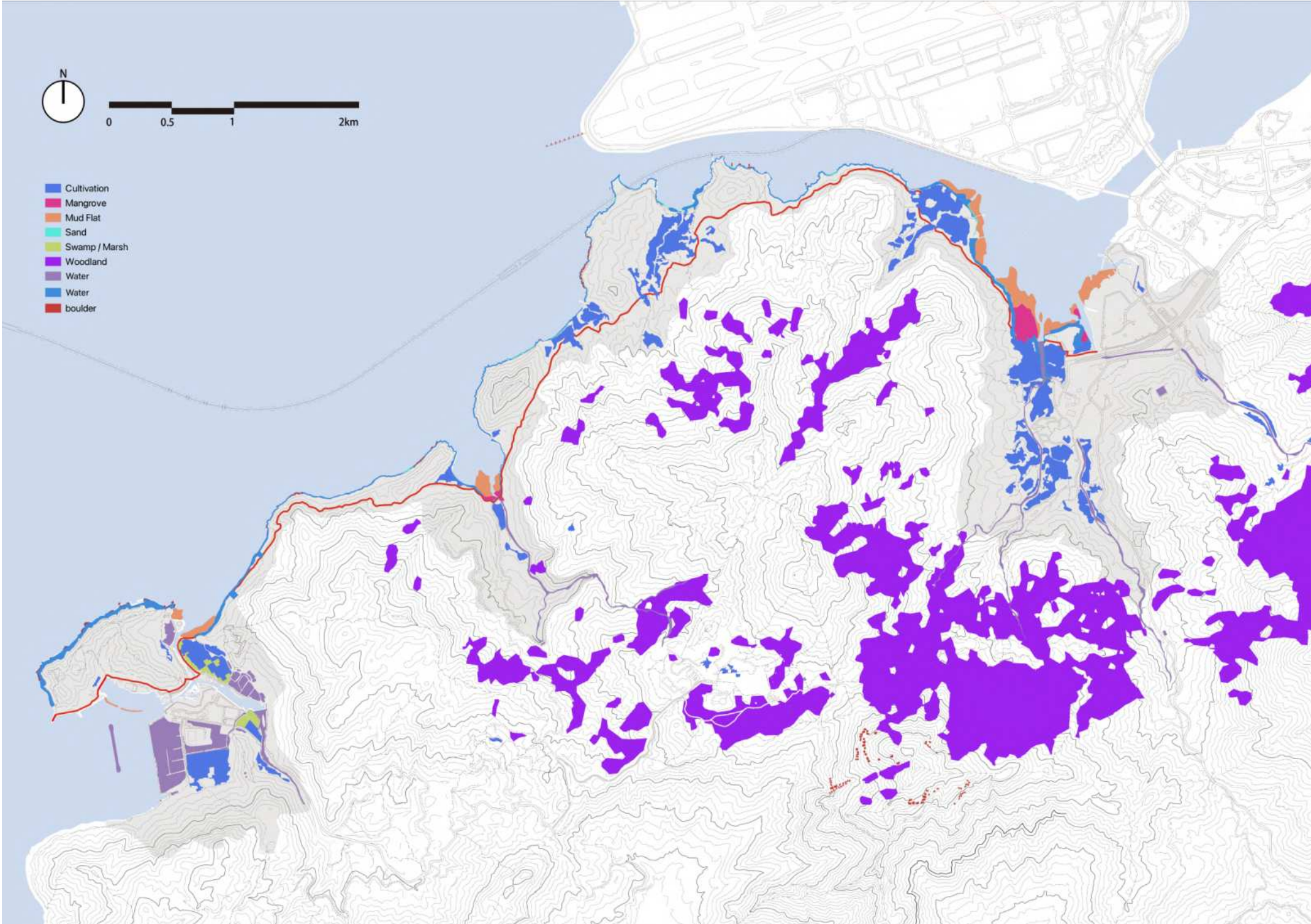
Both models ensure community-led operations, equitable revenue sharing, and alignment with ecological conservation goals, balancing tourism needs with cultural and environmental stewardship.

Overall Policies



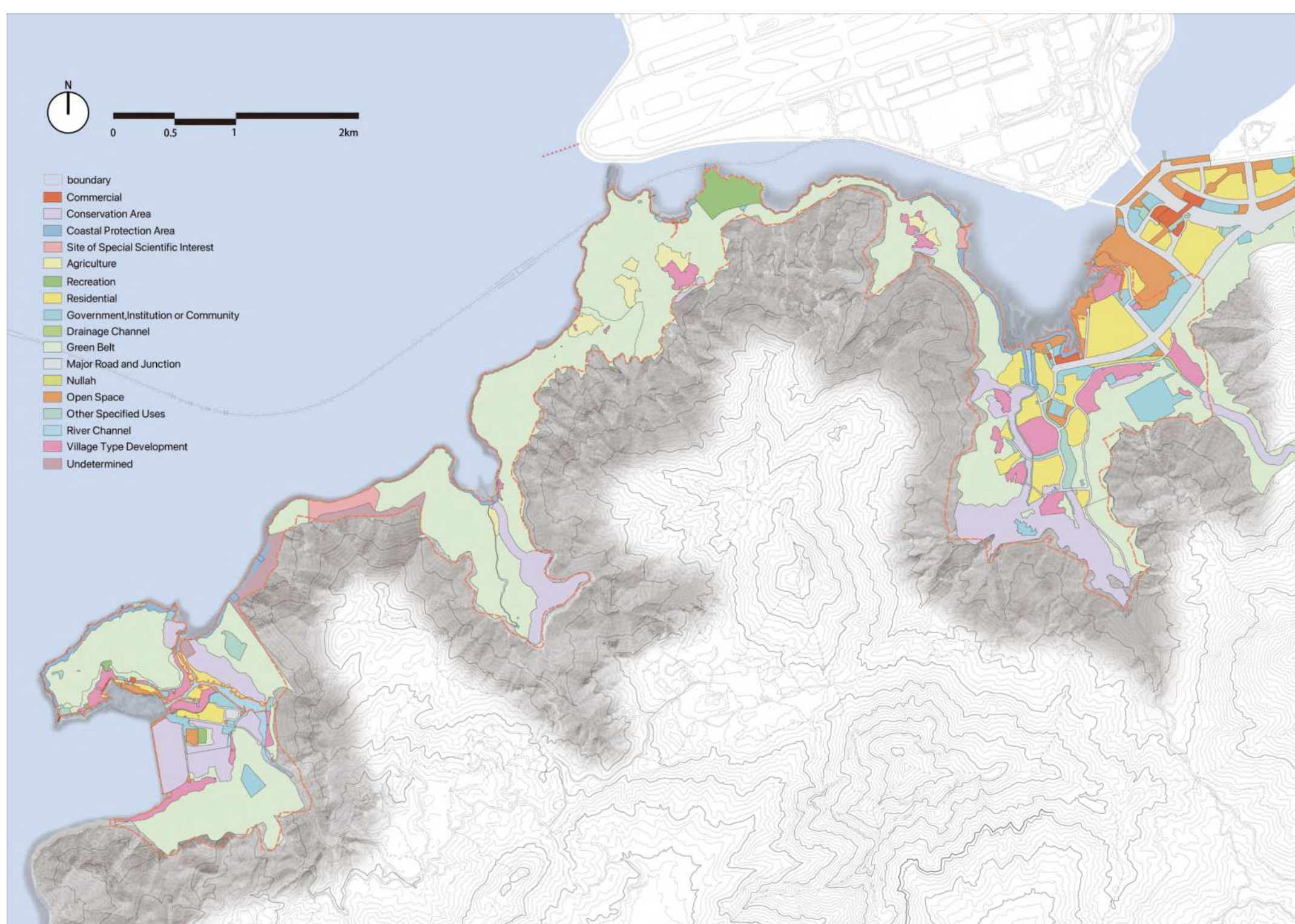
Transportation Strategies

The strategy enhances ferry services between Tung Chung, San Tau, Sha Lo Wan, and Tai O by increasing frequency, extending holiday hours, and aligning schedules with user needs. The strategy also develops dedicated cycling routes to link walking trails, villages, and public transport hubs. It improves subsidiary routes, including historic paths and seasonal trails, while direct land links between key nodes (e.g., Ngong Ping ↔ Tung O Area) also enhance accessibility.



Ecological Strategies

The strategy identifies areas of ecological value as ecologically sensitive areas, banning development in sensitive zones, and establishing habitat corridors to reconnect fragmented landscapes. Dynamic GIS monitoring and biannual boundary updates adapt to ecological shifts. Biodiversity surveys and species protection laws prevent harm to rare habitats. Community involvement includes training villagers as Trail Guardians for ecosystem monitoring and low-impact tourism stewardship, responsible visitor engagement.

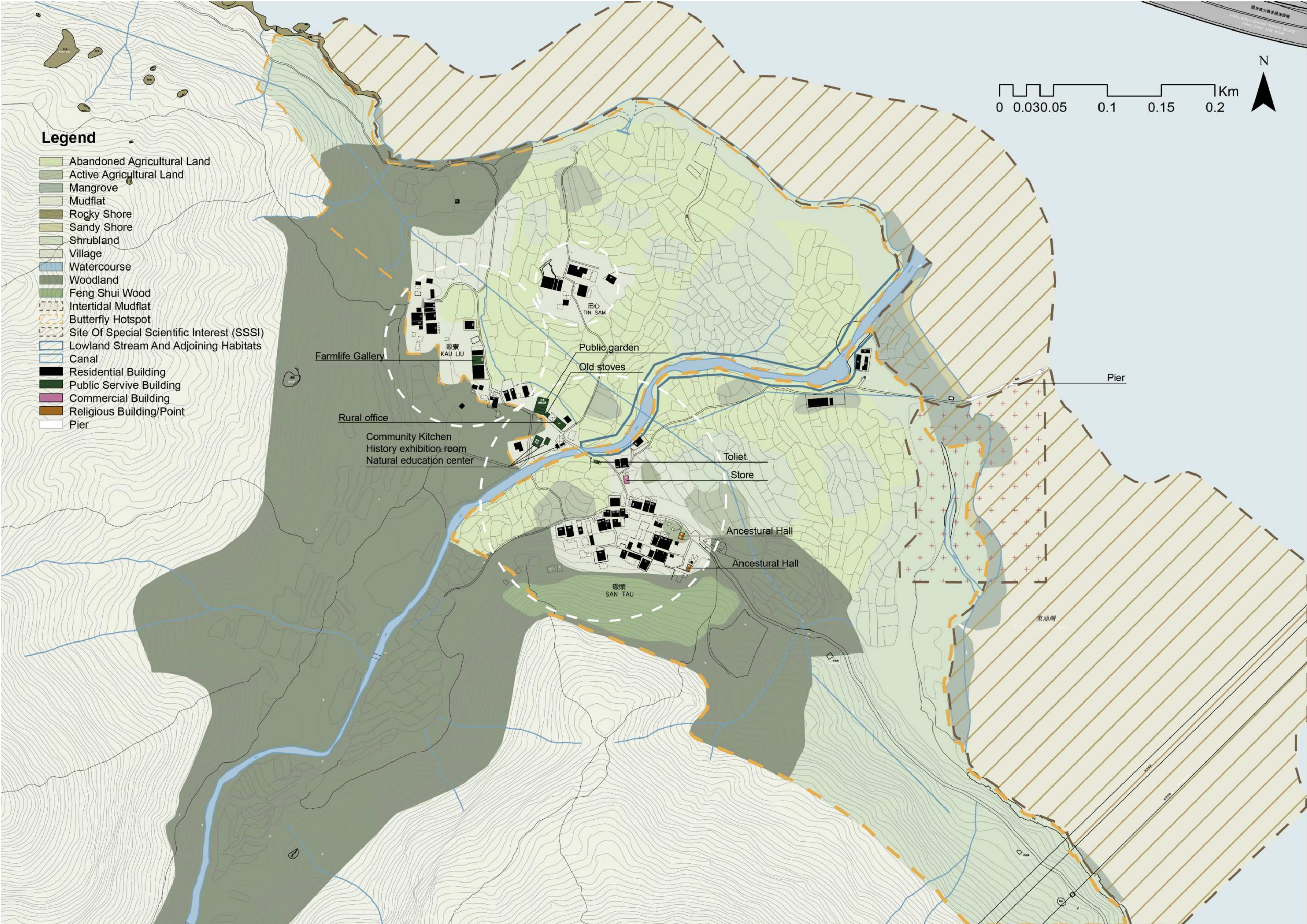


Proposed Zoning

The zoning framework integrates ecological, cultural, and community priorities through 3 key zones:
(1) Ecological Protection Areas, including expanded Coastal Protection Areas (CPA) and river-focused Conservation Areas (CA), which ban development in sensitive habitats (mangroves, rare species zones) and establish habitat corridors;
(2) Heritage Conservation Zones, safeguarding core sites (e.g., Tung Chung Fort, Tai O stilt houses) and buffer areas under AMO guidelines to preserve cultural integrity;
(3) Tourism and Service Zones, designating villages as tourism hubs (visitor centers, eco-lodges) or service nodes (low-impact rest stations, compost toilets) while protecting farmland.

CONCEPT DESIGN : Community-based Strategy Helps Revitalize the Villages Along Tung O Ancient Trail: A Case of SanTau

Site Mapping of San Tau



Sources in San Tau

San Tau Village has rich historical and cultural heritage, highlighted by well-preserved traditional structures such as stone and brick houses, ancestral halls, and multiple shrines. San Tau is also rich in ecological resources, with a variety of habitat types. Since 1984, 2.7 ha mangrove and mudflat have been designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to protect the rare but vulnerable seagrass bed in San Tau. Apart from that, San Tau is one of the few horseshoe crabs breeding and nursery grounds in Hong Kong that contains both two species (Chinese horseshoe crab Tachypleus tridentatus and mangrove horseshoe crab Carinoscorpius rotundicauda). The village has unique communal practices such as agricultural practices represents its sociocultural legacy. Additionally, its proximity to the reclaimed Hong Kong International Airport symbolizes a blend of historical continuity and modern transformation.

San Tau School Area Adaptive Use Project

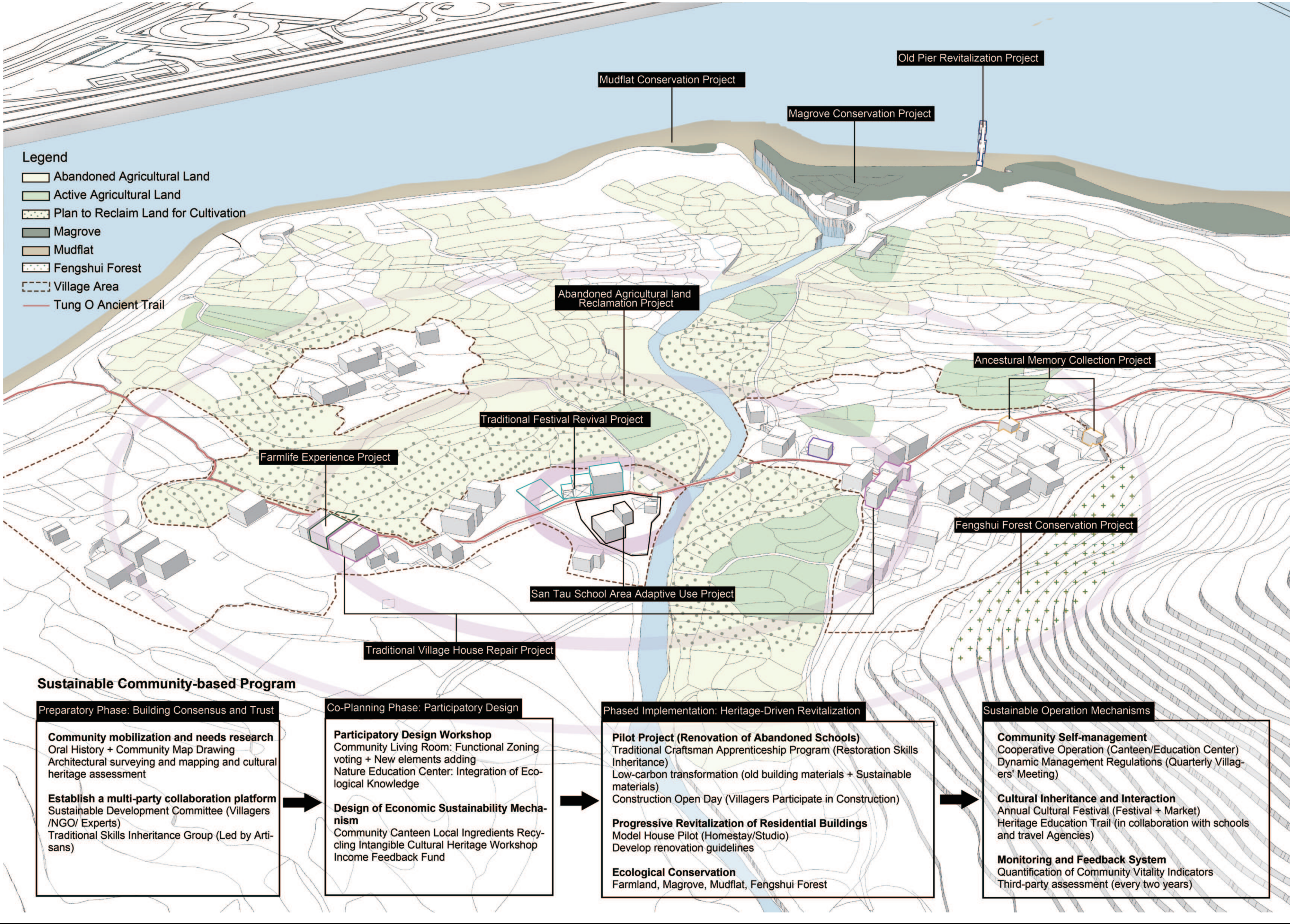
Statement of Significance of San Tau School

San Tau School (1959–1981) is an example of Hong Kong's mid-20th-century rural education heritage, embodying historical, social, and architectural significance. It reflects post-war efforts to improve literacy in remote villages and symbolizes the resilience of rural communities during Hong Kong's rapid urbanization. Historically, the school represents grassroots educational initiatives in post-war rural Hong Kong, addressing local needs amid limited resources. Socially, it stands as a testament to communal determination to prioritize education despite isolation and scarcity. For former students and families, it anchors shared memories and village identity, fostering intergenerational connections to narratives of perseverance. Although the school is closed, it is still Architecturally, its simple, functional design—using modest materials and traditional methods—exemplifies pragmatic rural school structures. The layout reflects mid-century educational practices to small communities.

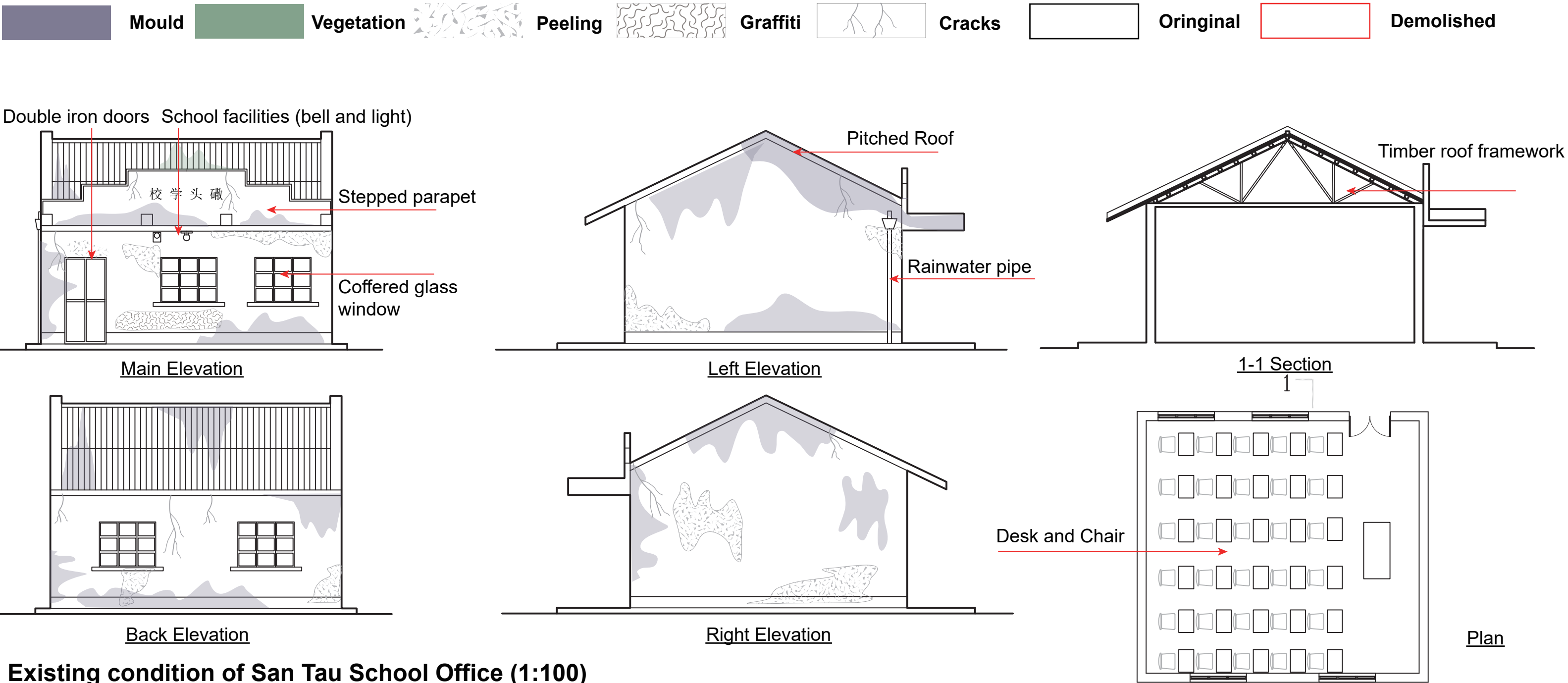
Attributes of San Tau School

No	Attributes	Description	Condition	Value	Photo reference	Strategy
1	Stepped parapet	A stepped parapet, with the plaster characters 「鐵頭學校」 ("San Tau School" in Chinese). The parapet was one of the architectural characteristics of village schools in Hong Kong at that time, simple and eye-catching, and distinguished from other buildings in the village.	Fair	High		Retain the original appearance, clean the entire parapet and repair the cracks on the surface.
2	Pitched roof	A common pitched roof in the countryside, which is paved with plates and the interior is a wooden frame structure, which is simple and durable.	Fair	Medium		Retain the original appearance, clean the dirt and vegetation on the roof
3	Windows (classroom)	The coffered glass window, with a metal frame and a concrete sill below, ensures light in the classroom.	Good	Medium		Retain the windows on the main façade, the other façades' windows can be changed according to the design scheme
4	Wall	The structure is good, the concrete walls are painted white, parts of the façades have peeled off, and there are stains and graffiti on the walls.	Fair	Low		Clean and repaint the wall, restore the original wall color, other materials can be added to transform the wall
5	Door	Double iron doors ensure indoor and outdoor connectivity, and glass Windows at the top of the door ensure light and sight, which is suitable for classroom.	Good	Low		Retain the original door, clean and repaint.
6	School facilities	The bell and light on the main façade, the old desks, chairs and blackboard in the classroom. They are the features of schoolhouse.	Fair	Medium		Retain the facilities in fair condition, make use of the facilities in decoration.
7	Rainwater pipe with drain pan on the top	Located on the outer wall of the parapet wall, for roof drainage.	Poor	Medium		Clean and repaint the pipe as its original color.
8	Double pan and roll tiled roof	Located on the roof of the building adjacent to the classroom, it is a traditional Cantonese roof with a canopy under the eaves.	Fair	Medium		Clean the roof and replace the canopy with a more suitable kind.
9	Windows (office)	Same coffered glass window of school, with a metal frame and a concrete sill below, but the window on the main façade is sealed during renovations in recent years.	Fair	Medium		Keep the Windows as they are and consider whether to restore the Windows that are sealed.
10	Playground	Cement floor playground, bathroom and storage room around the playground.	Poor	Medium		Clean the grass on the playground, repair the cracks. Restore original function.

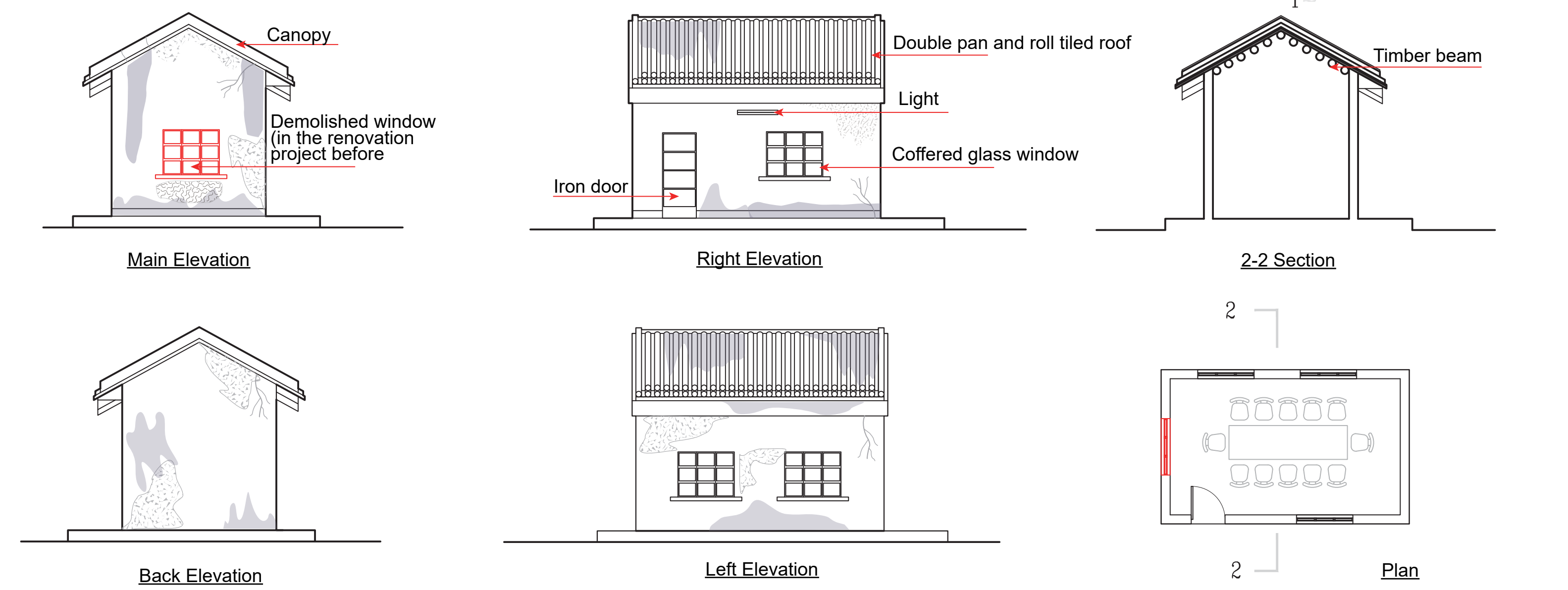
Community-led Project of San Tau



Existing condition of San Tau School (1:100)



Existing condition of San Tau School Office (1:100)



Heritage Impacts & Mitigation Measures

Proposed Actional Works		Affected Attributes	Assessment	Mitigation Measures
School building	Stepped parapet restoration	Historical integrity, Aesthetics	Acceptable with mitigation	Clean surface, repair cracks, retain original plaster characters ("鐵頭學校").
	Retain former classroom windows on main and back façades	Architectural authenticity	Acceptable	Preserve main façade windows; other façade's windows may be modified per design needs.
	Convert one of the back façade's windows into a door	Structural integrity, Historical authenticity	Acceptable with mitigation	Use coffered glass windows matching original style; avoid altering load-bearing walls.
	Wood finish addition on windowsill lower space of main facade	Aesthetic continuity	Acceptable	Apply non-invasive finishes (e.g., removable wood veneer) to preserve original concrete structure.
	External wall repainting to the original appearance	Visual coherence, heritage	Acceptable with mitigation	Clean stains/graffiti, repaint in original color; allow non intrusive material additions.
	Dining room & activity room conversion	Functional adaptability	Acceptable	Repurpose existing spaces while retaining structural layout; avoid permanent alterations.
Office building	Option 1 & 2: Exhibition room development	Cultural interpretation	Acceptable	Display historical artifacts with minimal physical intervention; use QR codes for digital storytelling.
	Option 3: kitchen (water and water supply facilities, electrical renovation, air conditioning, furniture)	Energy consumption, Modern functionality	Acceptable with mitigation	Use solar-powered systems, integrate concealed wiring, and select modular furniture to minimize structural impact.
Outdoor space	Natural education center construction	Ecological footprint	Acceptable with mitigation	Use sustainable materials, integrate low-impact design, and limit land alteration.
	Agriculture planting experience zone	Land use, Ecological balance	Acceptable with mitigation	Implement seasonal agriculture tourism, use organic farming practices, and control visitor density.
	New glass corridor connecting school and office	Visual harmony, Accessibility	Acceptable with mitigation	Use frameless glass to minimize visual intrusion; align corridor path with historical circulation routes.
	Expansion of fence area	Landscape integrity, land tenure right	Acceptable with mitigation	Replicate the original fence design (stone pillars with metal rails); avoid encroaching on others' land ownership.